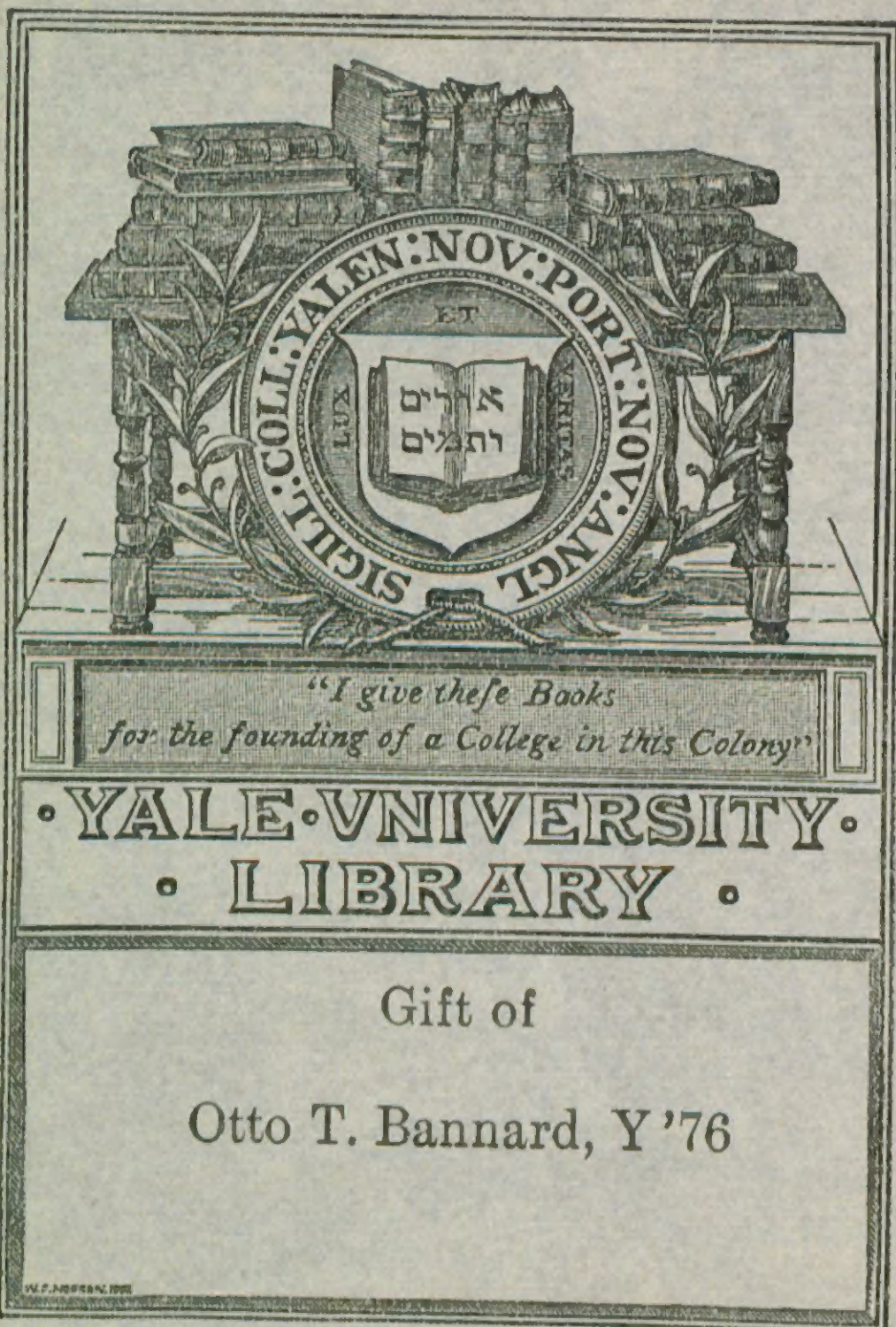


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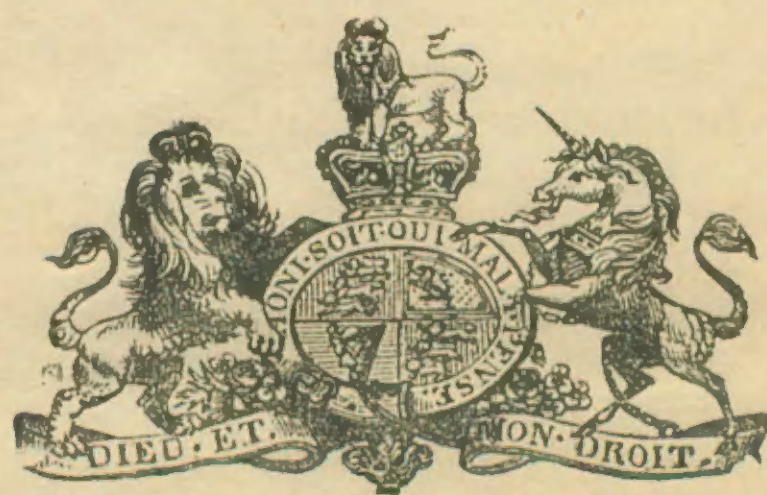
OUTBREAK OF BUBONIC PLAGUE

AT

HONG KONG.

(*In continuation of [C.—7461] July 1894.*)

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.
August 1894.



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1894.

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The Gift of Otto T. Bannard

HONG KONG

FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE

RELATIVE TO THE

OUTBREAK OF BUBONIC PLAGUE

AT

HONG KONG.

Dec 26

(In continuation of No. 1401, July 1894)

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Printed in Hong Kong by the Government of Hong Kong
August 1894



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1894

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HONG KONG.

FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE

RELATIVE TO THE

OUTBREAK OF BUBONIC PLAGUE

AT

HONG KONG.

No. 1.

SIR WILLIAM ROBINSON to the MARQUESS OF RIPON.

(Received July 18, 1894.)

TELEGRAPHIC.

No change. Total mortality 2,442. Will telegraph weekly.

No. 2.

SIR WILLIAM ROBINSON to the MARQUESS OF RIPON.

(Received July 23, 1894.)

[Answered by No. 10.]

Government House, Hong Kong,

June 20, 1894.

MY LORD MARQUESS,

I HAD the honour to receive from your Lordship, on the 16th June, the following telegram: [See No. 9 in [C.—7461.], July 1894].

2. I accordingly replied on the same day: [See No. 10 in [C.—7461]].

3. Your Lordship will have received my Despatches, dated May 17, 18, 23 (two), 28, 29 (two), and June 4, and my telegrams of the 18th May, 2nd, 4th, and 16th June* in reference to the epidemic which has been in existence in this Colony since the beginning of last May.

4. At the risk of repeating some of the statements I have made in those communications, it may be convenient to your Lordship that I should forward to you a narrative, disjointed though it may be, of the principal incidents that have occurred in connexion with the plague during the last month.

5. On my return to the Colony from Japan on the 15th May, after eight week's leave of absence, I found that Major-General Barker, who had been administering the Government since the 30th April, owing to the sudden departure, on account of illness, of Mr. O'Brien, the Colonial Secretary, had issued a proclamation on the 10th May declaring Hong Kong to be an infected port in accordance with the provisions of the Public Health Ordinance, No. 24, of 1887.

6. A permanent committee of the Sanitary Board, consisting of three members, had thereupon been appointed, and those gentlemen, who, in conjunction with Dr. Lowson, Dr. Penny, R.N., and Surgeon-Major James, have since acted with extraordinary energy and efficiency, at once passed bye-laws and regulations which I have already forwarded to you and which were, without delay, passed and confirmed by the Executive Council and ultimately legalised by the Legislative Council.

* Nos. 13, 14, 15, 16, 19, 20, 21, 27, and 3, 6, 7, 10 in [C.—7461].

7. Hospitals were at once established (1) on board the "Hygeia" (2) at Kennedy Town police station and (3) on the 20th May at the glass works at Kennedy Town. The first two were managed by the Government doctors and the lady nurses from the Government hospital; the latter was handed over to the Tung Wah Hospital Committee and worked by Chinese doctors, under the supervision of the Colonial Medical Staff and a naval doctor (Dr. Penny). It was deemed advisable to give the Chinese doctors a free hand at first. In any case, it is difficult to persuade the Chinese to report cases of sickness, and their foolish and violent prejudice against Western medical men is quite sufficient to induce them, as they certainly did for the first fortnight or three weeks of the existence of the plague, not only to secrete their sick but often to desert their plague-stricken friends and relations after death.

8. Under these circumstances, the necessity for a rigorous house-to-house visitation became most apparent and the military and naval authorities, Major-General Barker and Commodore Boyes, at the suggestion of the Government, rendered every possible assistance in this direction; naval and military doctors were furnished, and at least 300 men from the Shropshire Regiment and officers and men from the R.E. and R.A. detachments were, amongst others, detailed for the duty of house-to-house visitation and for cleansing and disinfecting the houses in which cases of plague had occurred.

9. At this time, about the 21st May, the greatest dissatisfaction was shown by the Chinese community in regard to the methods of sanitation we were employing. Complaints were made that the privacy of women's apartments was being invaded, that women and children were being "frightened out of their wits" by the daily visits of the military and police, and then it began to be rumoured that the "Foreigners" had sinister and unspeakable designs on the women and children.

10. On inquiry, I found that these complaints were much exaggerated and that the majority of the Chinese, after being made to understand what the object was which the Government had in view, did not object to the visitation but even assisted those deputed to search their houses, and to disinfect and cleanse them when necessary. A large deputation of Chinese waited upon me, nevertheless, requesting that the house-to-house visitation should cease, and that they might take their sick away from the "Hygeia" and the Kennedy Town Hospital altogether. As already reported in my Despatch of the 23rd May,* I had to inform those gentlemen in pretty strong terms that Hong Kong was a British Colony and, as they had chosen to reside in it, they must submit to British laws and methods of sanitation, and, further, that, as I was responsible for the safety of the community, I must positively decline to listen to their requests. I further pointed out to them that, as residents of Hong Kong, it was their bounden duty to aid the Government in the terrible crisis in which it was placed and not to obstruct it, or allow their people to obstruct it, in any way whatever. Though the deputation, composed of wealthy and so-called educated Chinamen, left Government House apparently satisfied, in a few days time defamatory and libellous placards were posted up in Hong Kong, and later on in larger numbers in Canton, attributing the most ghastly cruelties to the English doctors, charging them, in fact, with cutting open pregnant women, and with scooping out the eyes of children in order to make medicines for the treatment of plague-stricken patients.

11. Your Lordship will find it difficult to believe that, after upwards of 50 years' occupation of Hong Kong, and after more than 50 years' of benign, not to say paternal, government, Chinamen, residents in this British Dependency, could be found who were ignorant enough to believe such statements and treacherous enough to give them currency. Such, however, is unfortunately the case.

12. As there had been some opposition to the police in the Chinese quarter the day previously, and these statements were likely to inflame the passions of the mob, I immediately requested the Commodore to anchor a gunboat opposite to the Tung Wah Hospital and Taipingshan, and Commodore Boyes at once moved the "Tweed" into the position I indicated. I also offered a handsome reward for any information which would lead to the arrest and conviction of the author of these disgraceful placards. There can be no doubt that these steps had a very salutary effect as no more placards have been issued here.

13. The epidemic, a little later than the date of the above mentioned occurrence, notwithstanding the heavy rains—amounting altogether to some 23 inches—was evidently on the increase. The exodus of panic-stricken Chinese was also on the increase, hongs were being emptied of their clerks, chair coolies by hundreds deserted their employers without warning, and many domestic servants applied for the amount of their wages

then due to enable them to go to Canton or to join their families on the mainland. No less than 300 men left the China Sugar Factory and, crossing over to Kowloon, started to walk to Swatow, a distance of 180 miles. At this time, the admissions to the hospital were 60, 70, and sometimes 80, a day, and the deaths in hospitals, and the dead bodies collected outside were on one occasion 109 in 24 hours.

14. When matters were at their worst, I received information that the "literati," who were doubtless in a measure responsible for the dissemination of the disgusting statements respecting the medical men in this Colony, had recommenced operations in Canton. It was currently stated that, if any portion of Taipingshan was burnt down, as had been suggested, an attack would be made upon the Consulate at Canton, and numerous defamatory placards, involving not only the medical profession but the "Red-haired barbarian" generally, were being posted broadcast over that city.

15. With a view of stopping the anti-foreign feeling which was then assuming serious proportions in Canton, at the instigation, probably, of persons here, I requested the Consul, Mr. B. Brenan, to seek an immediate interview with the Viceroy and to demand a contradiction of these libellous and malicious placards. The Viceroy, I am bound to say, with apparent readiness issued a proclamation which, as you will see from my Despatch of the 29th May,* I did not consider sufficiently explicit, as it was in far too general terms. I therefore requested the Consul to see the Viceroy again and to point out to him that, in my opinion, his proclamation was not nearly adequate to the occasion. The Viceroy, therefore, issued a second proclamation which appeared more to the purpose, but which, coming too late, had little effect on the already exasperated ruffians in his province. The Registrar-General then, at my desire, drew up a proclamation which was issued throughout Hong-Kong warning persons from giving credence to the lies which were current as to the treatment of patients and others in our hospitals, and stating, in the simplest language, what the treatment was, what objects the Government had in view, and how carefully, and with due regard to Chinese customs (as far as the nature of the disease would admit), the corpses of their dead friends and relatives were disposed of. I have forwarded all the correspondence which has passed between the Colonial Secretary and Mr. Brenan on these subjects, as well as subsequent correspondence respecting the brutal attack by the rowdies of Canton on two American lady-missionary doctors, to Her Majesty's Minister at Peking, requesting him to lay the correspondence before the Tsung-Li-Yamen.

16. It is to be hoped, though I fear such hope is not likely to be realised, that some strong repressive measures will be taken to prevent such outrageous proceedings in future in reference to the subjects of a friendly Power.

17. On the 16th June, the Consul informed me that the Viceroy had promised to assure the safety of the Consulates, but that he could not be responsible for the conduct of the people towards foreigners in the villages, etc. outside of Canton and that, therefore, missionaries and foreigners had better keep themselves within doors.

18. From time to time, I have kept your Lordship informed of the progress of the plague, from which you will have learnt that there has been no considerable diminution in the ravages of the disease hitherto, but I am happy to state that the last returns are really more satisfactory, and sanguine hopes are generally entertained that the worst is, at last, over.

19. Owing to the number of persons whom it has been necessary to dislodge from the infected houses in the Chinese quarter, a number which is estimated at about 7,000, the Government has had to incur considerable and immediate expenditure. Numerous mat-sheds have been erected, and Government has hired blocks of unoccupied buildings and go-downs for the segregation and isolation of those whom it has been necessary to keep under observation. Upwards of 350 houses have already been condemned as unfit for habitation. These have been closed and walled in. A *cordon sanitaire* has also been established with a view of keeping persons from the infected portion of the town (the western district) from emigrating to the eastern district. Thousands of people, roughly estimated at 80,000, as I have stated in my telegram of the 16th June,† have left the island for the neighbouring province within the last month in every sort of marine conveyance, sampans, boats, junks, and river steamers, and I am informed that persons have walked on board the steamers at the wharves at Hong Kong and have died before they reached Canton, eight or nine hours distant.

20. On about the 12th of this month, the Glass Works' Hospital, under the management of the Tung Wah Committee, became seriously overcrowded, there being some 200 patients in a building capable of holding about a hundred. Owing to the great scarcity

* No. 20 in [C.—7461.].

† No. 10 in [C.—7461.].

of labour it was impossible to build refuges fast enough. The new building recently finished for a pig and sheep depôt was about to be placed at the disposal of the sanitary board and the staff of the Nethersole branch of the Alice Hospital had offered its services to the Government. In the meantime, however, and before these transfers could be effected, the Directors of the Benevolent Hospital at Canton, through the agency of the Viceroy, requested that any sick Chinese subjects who might wish to go to Canton or desire, in case of death, to have their corpses sent to their native villages, might be forwarded in specially prepared junks to that capital. Several of the compradores employing large numbers of clerks also requested that they might be allowed to move the sick, wherever found, to Canton and they also gave a pledge that, if that were permitted, they would remain in this Colony, and not take part in the general exodus. Failing that permission, they would leave at once, thus placing the banks and houses of business in even a worse position than they were at the time the application was made.

21. After serious consideration, I did not feel justified in acceding to their requests. It was true that the Chinese hospital was considerably overcrowded, that the Chinese doctors had not proved that they were capable of dealing with the plague, whereas there was no doubt that a compliance with the request would have, more or less, defeated the efficiency of the house-to-house visitation, and that cases of sickness would not have been reported to the police as they were then, and are now, obliged to be. After consultation with my Executive Council, the majority of members agreed with me in thinking that, as a tentative measure, one or two large junk-loads of sick Chinese subjects might be removed to the Benevolent Hospital at Canton on the following conditions:—

- (1) That the case of sickness had been reported to the police.
- (2) That the patient had passed through the hospital.
- (3) That the patient expressed a desire to go to Canton.
- (4) That the doctors certified that the patient was fit to be removed.
- (5) That the junk or junks were properly provisioned, equipped, &c., &c. for the comfortable conveyance of such patients to Canton.

22. Four small junks were sent down and towed by a Chinese steamer, and some 170 patients were sent away on Thursday and Friday, the 14th and 15th.

The Consul, in compliance with my wishes, sent a doctor to examine and report upon the junks on their arrival at Canton and I am glad to say that his report is very satisfactory. Only eight of the sick, as I am informed, died on the way up, and the remainder have been visited by the European doctors and are well and comfortably housed.

23. The congested condition of the 'Tung Wah Glass Works' Hospital was thus relieved, and it has now been closed. In its stead, the new pig depôt, capable of holding 140 patients, has been opened. The management of it has been taken over to a much greater extent than in the case of the Glass Works by European doctors and the internal arrangements are carried on by European ward masters and attendants.

24. It would be too much, perhaps, to say that the Chinese doctors are convinced that their treatment of the disease is radically defective, but as our staff of medical men is about to be reinforced by two medical officers, sent down by Admiral Fremantle from Japan, and by two others whose services I have secured, one from Swatow and another from Ningpo, we are now in a position to assume charge of nearly all the patients that are sent to the several hospitals.

25. The hospitals at present in existence are:—

- (1) The "Hygeia" for 40 patients.
- (2) Kennedy Town for 45 patients.
- (3) Kennedy Town Convalescent for 25 patients.
- (4) New Pig Depôt for 140 patients.
- (5) New Glass Works' Matshed for 50 patients.

26. The last of these is under the management of Messrs. Burton and Baily, of the Nethersole Branch of the Alice Hospital.

27. As to the origin of the plague, numerous theories exist. It is true that in my Despatch of the 17th May* I said: "Doubtless it has been introduced into Hong Kong from Canton," this was the popular theory at the time, but further information leads me to the conclusion that it is impossible to speak definitely on this point, and hardly safe to hazard a guess.

Since the outbreak here, it has been ascertained that the plague is endemic in Yun-nan and Pakhoi; that it has been endemic in one or both of these places for the

last seven years: and that, while it has been extremely severe in Canton, it has prevailed, according to his Excellency the Governor of Indo-China, all over the south of China.

Hong Kong receives a regular and constant supply of pigs, for the use of the Chinese, from Pakhoi, and nearly all other articles of food are obtained from Canton, with which this Colony is in hourly connexion.

The same may be said with regard to Macao, but it is a curious fact that, notwithstanding this frequent communication and notwithstanding the immigration of thousands of persons from Hong Kong into Macao during the last month, not a single case of plague has occurred in that Colony.

As your Lordship is perhaps aware, Hong Kong has recently experienced the most severe drought that has ever been known; with one exception, no rain fell between the middle of October 1893, and the 16th May 1894. It is, I think, very probable that the want of sufficient water (though the present storage capacity is 378,000,000 gallons), and the filthy habits of life amongst the 210,000 Chinese who reside here, though the new drainage system in course of completion was adopted as an improvement on the one formerly existing, have rendered Hong Kong liable to the invasion and development of the germ of the Bubonic plague. Having found a footing here, the great danger is, of course, that, as in other parts of China, it may become endemic.

In Dr. Sharp Deane's report of 1891 on the health of Pakhoi, I observe the following statement: "The Chinese are of opinion that the Bubonic plague emanates from the ground, and is favoured by a long continuance of dry weather, when the earth becomes porous and numerous fissures appear on the surface facilitating the escape of whatever causes the disease." These conditions prevailed to an unusual extent in Hong Kong during the seven months to which I have referred.

28. In this connexion, I may mention that the Japanese experts who have been sent here to diagnose the disease claim to have discovered the bacillus of the plague and the medical staff admit the claim.

29. As to the effect of the plague, it is felt in every branch of business, and the loss to the public revenue, to bankers, merchants, shipping companies, the sugar refining industry, traders, shop keepers, owners of property and the labouring classes can never be accurately determined. On the whole, perhaps, the shipping interests are the most affected. At this season, the emigrants to the Straits Settlements have hitherto been counted by thousands per month, and the movements of passengers up and down the China Coast to and from Kwangtung through Hong Kong usually amount to vast numbers. Pacific mail steamers leaving for Vancouver refuse to take Chinese passengers. The English, French, and German mails refuse to take native passengers, and the two latter decline cargo also, or even to enter into the limits of the harbour. Irregular liners avoid calling at the port altogether.

30. Considering the great importance of Hong Kong as a shipping port, it is only possible to conjecture what is lost by quarantine regulations against her in every direction which drive away vessels from her harbour, and deprive all, down to the humblest labourer, of their proportion of gain from the coaling, victualling, loading, and discharging of the immense fleet which ordinarily frequents these waters.

31. Chinese hong merchants have retired to the mainland, leaving their premises to caretakers and their commercial engagements in abeyance, until the public health shall be restored. The effect of this is much felt by merchants whose merchandise is left on their hands beyond the contract time and many have had to call on their bankers to enable them to tide over the lock-up of money. The bankers, under such circumstances, buy and sell fewer bills and they witness the contraction of all the ramifications of trade in which they have a financial interest. The turn-over in sugar and sugar refining is reckoned not by thousands, but by millions, of dollars, and although, happily, not suspended, it is, for the moment, crippled for want of labour. Landlords in the affected districts of the city receive no rents, and the natives generally, in the midst of all their troubles, find the necessary articles of food 30 or even 50 per cent. above the usual price.

32. Without exaggeration, I may assert that, so far as trade and commerce are concerned, the plague has assumed the importance of an unexampled calamity.

33. As to the "arrangements contemplated," I have to inform your Lordship that, at a meeting of the Legislative Council on the 12th June, I briefly sketched the methods which the Government intended to pursue with a view of preventing a recurrence of such a catastrophe. I enclose an extract from that speech. The remedy is, as your Lordship will see, a very drastic one; it may result in the destruction and re-building of one-tenth part of Hong Kong. It will certainly necessitate the extension in every direction of houses fitted for Chinese occupation on improved sanitary principles. It will doubtless

cause a general increase in rents, an increase in the cost of living as well as a general increase in the rate of wages. It will also necessitate the increase of the storage capacity of the Tytam Water Works so as to secure an additional supply of about 80,000,000 gallons of water. The expense to the Government of such sweeping alterations and additions it is impossible to estimate.

As regards the existing drainage and water works and their completion and extension your Lordship will, no doubt, consult Mr. Cooper, the Director of Public Works, who is now on leave of absence in England, and who can give you the fullest particulars and most reliable information in respect to those subjects.

34. In reply to my speech, I may here mention that, on behalf of the unofficial members and the community at large, the senior unofficial member, the Honourable C. P. Chater, promised that the Government should be loyally supported in all its endeavours to cope with the unfortunate dilemma in which the Colony is placed. That promise will, as I have inferred, involve the Colony in an enormous outlay, the amount of which it would at present be rash to predict.

35. I may remind your Lordship that in the case of Mauritius the Imperial Government, about two years ago, came to the assistance of that Colony. I have no doubt that if I should hereafter appeal to your Lordship for similar consideration, it would generously be extended to this Colony, which is suffering in every direction from the terrible visitation with which it has been so suddenly overwhelmed.

36. The Government and the community, as I have stated in this Despatch, as well as publicly, is deeply indebted to the military and naval forces, and especially to the Colonel of the Shropshire Regiment, for the great assistance they have rendered, and they regret the loss of one gallant officer, Captain Vesey, and at least one private, who have fallen victims to the plague. To Mr. Francis, Q.C., Mr. May, Mr. Mitchell-Innes, Captain Hastings, Mr. Crook, Mr. Tooker, and many others, lay volunteers, the Government are also under great obligations. Indeed I may say that several public officers, and especially the medical staff and all the staff of the Public Works' Department, are doing additional duty unhesitatingly and ungrudgingly and with a single desire to aid in the repression of a fell disease the like of which has, happily, never before been experienced in this hitherto prosperous Colony.

37. In conclusion, I have to express a hope that your Lordship will approve of my proceedings as described in this and previous Despatches on the same subject.

I have, &c.

(Signed) WILLIAM ROBINSON.

Enclosure 1 in No. 2.

NOTICE issued by His Excellency the GOVERNOR.

Whereas certain bad characters have been spreading lying rumours regarding the treatment of the sick in Hong Kong, and the burial of the dead; this notice is issued to remove all doubts and suspicions and to bring comfort to the hearts of the people. Ever since the plague appeared in Hong Kong every effort has been made to cure the sick, and many have been cured. Hospitals have been established under Western and Chinese doctors, and people are free to go to what hospital they please. In the case of those who have died, they have been properly encoffined, and buried with every care in a cemetery specially selected for the purpose, where grave stones are placed on each grave, with a number and the name of the deceased, so that his last resting place may be easily recognised and so that his remains may not be neglected by his surviving relations. The Governor has also written to the Viceroy of Canton and some of the sick have, in consequence, been removed to the Canton Hospital, they having expressed a wish to return to their native country. You people will therefore see from all these measures that my great desire is to benefit the people and to restore them, if possible, to health. Do not, then, believe lying rumours. The rascals who spread them will most certainly be severely punished. Take heed lest you also become involved in their machinations and repentance comes too late.

Enclosure 2 in No. 2.

However, if blame is to be attached to the Government in the past, I am determined at all events that it shall not be attached to the Government in the future, and with this object I have asked the Attorney-General to prepare a Bill, the main principle of

which I will endeavour to explain to you as shortly as possible. As stated by Mr. Leach just now, that very able and energetic member of the community, Mr. Francis, Q.C., has shown the greatest ability and energy in grappling with all the correspondence and many difficulties which have arisen out of this epidemic. That learned Q.C. has promised to assist in preparing a Bill which, I hope, will render a recurrence of such an epidemic as the one now with us impossible in the future. This Bill will, of course, be of a very drastic character. It will give the Government—this is of course simply what we propose—it will give the Government power to enter into immediate possession of, and pull down, and destroy, all dwelling-houses and blocks of houses unfit for human habitation. It will provide that the Government shall at once resume the possession of all land on which such dwellings are built, paying, of course, compensation for so doing. It will provide that the Government shall have power to enter all houses now insanitary, though capable of being put into thoroughly sanitary condition. Owners will be compelled to amend all such defects in the houses as render them insanitary. The Government will have power to re-survey and re-arrange all lots so taken, and open new roads and improve the old ones. Power will also be taken to enter and inspect all Chinese houses; such houses will be numbered and classified, and a fixed number of tenants will be allotted to each house and room, and owners will be obliged to enter into a covenant that that number shall not, in any case, be exceeded; any infraction of that covenant will, of course, be followed by heavy penalties. There are naturally and necessarily many questions of detail; questions, for instance, of providing for those removed from infected districts, questions dealing with the rights of mortgagees and lessees, and questions of awarding compensation; but, roughly speaking, the main features of the Bill are those I have endeavoured to describe. With an Ordinance of this sort in force, I need hardly tell you that Taipingshan and a great many streets not in Taipingshan will probably be razed to the ground and re-erected on proper sanitary principles. You will understand that such a measure as this affects many existing interests and will be of a very complicated character, and, necessarily, the Attorney-General, even with the assistance of Mr. Francis, will require some considerable time in which to prepare it. I can only hope, however, that he will not keep us long in suspense for I think that the old adage “Strike while the iron is hot” is most applicable just now. I feel also certain that when the Bill comes before you, recognising the necessity for some very strong measure and realising the dreadful effect of the plague on the best interests of the Colony in the future if any half measures should be adopted, you will give it your full and ready support. There is another matter connected with the plague which I may refer to, and that is the possibility of increasing our water supply. I suppose that drought to a great measure is responsible for this epidemic, and I understand that there is a large storage capacity available both at Tytam Reservoir and at Pokfulam if the Council were to decide that the storage capacity should be increased. I may say that, in my own opinion, it will be no use giving a larger supply of water to the Chinese quarter unless it is distributed in a proper manner by responsible officials. What we want, as was well said in the paper this morning, is not so much a house-to-house visitation as a drain-to-drain visitation, and, unless we can flush these drains regularly, I am afraid we shall not get rid of the seeds of the disease. It would be retrograde of me to say, perhaps, that the separate drainage system was a failure, but I cannot help being of opinion that the proper system, if it could be carried out, for Chinatown would be the surface system (hear, hear) which is in force in the West India Islands where I have resided. There you see everything above ground, whilst here you do not see the dead cats, the dead rats, and old rags that fill up the drains and cause such an intolerable and dangerous nuisance. I should be glad to know what the feeling of the unofficial members is in regard to the additional water supply. I should be prepared to call for reports from experts here, if they considered it advisable, and I understand that for a moderate expense—\$70,000 or \$80,000—we could get 70,000,000 gallons more at Tytam alone. Before sitting down, I think there is one other thing I ought to say and that is that I am sure the community at large and the Government feel most deeply indebted to the military and naval authorities for the gallant voluntary assistance which the officers and men have given to us, and are still affording to us, during this plague. (Applause.) They have thrown themselves into the disgusting and filthy work required of them with true characteristic British pluck, and one gallant officer has sacrificed his life in endeavouring to assist the community. I am quite sure that, when the sad history of this plague is written, one of the brightest spots will be that page which records how officers and men, numbering over three hundred in all, gallantly assisted us by risking their lives with a view to saving the lives of thousands of others from whom they could never expect recompense, gratitude, or even thanks. (Applause.) I fully

endorse all that the Attorney-General has said with reference to Mr. Francis. I appreciate his help most thoroughly. I also wish to say that the Government is indebted to several public officers and lay volunteers, though the latter are not in such numbers as I should like to see, for the courage and energy they have shown in endeavouring to grapple with this disease. I hope, therefore, gentlemen, after what I have said, that you will be prepared to give the Government your fullest and most hearty support in any measure and in any action we may take not only to stamp out this plague but to prevent a recurrence of it in the near future.

No. 3.

SIR WILLIAM ROBINSON to the MARQUESS OF RIPON.
(Received July 26, 1894.)

TELEGRAPHIC.

Total of deaths 2,474. Will telegraph weekly returns.

No. 4.

SIR WILLIAM ROBINSON to the MARQUESS OF RIPON.
(Received July 30, 1894.)

TELEGRAPHIC.

No new cases of plague for three days. Suggest publication.

No. 5.

SIR WILLIAM ROBINSON to the MARQUESS OF RIPON.
(Received July 30, 1894.)

MY LORD MARQUESS,

Government House, Hongkong,
June 22, 1894.

WITH reference to the 28th paragraph of my Despatch of the 20th June,* I transmit to you, for your information, a cutting from the "China Mail," headed, "Discovery of the Plague Bacillus. Interview with Professor Kitasato."

I have, &c.

(Signed) WILLIAM ROBINSON.

Enclosure in No. 5.

"THE CHINA MAIL," Hongkong, Wednesday, June 20, 1894.

DISCOVERY OF THE PLAGUE BACILLUS.

INTERVIEW with Professor KITASATO.

It has been known for some time that two Japanese gentlemen, experts with regard to infectious diseases, have made a special study of the local outbreak of Asiatic typhus. It was a wise measure of the Japanese Government to send these scientists here, but the results of their investigations will concern and, we trust, eventually benefit, this Colony as much as Japan. One of these gentlemen, Professor Kitasato, after passing through the usual course of medical studies at the Tokyo University and taking his M.D. degree, spent seven years, from 1885 to 1892, at Dr. Koch's Institute in Berlin, where he devoted all his time to the study of the bacteriology of infectious diseases. After successfully passing the medical professorate-examinations in Berlin, he returned to Japan, and established there, unconnected with the Government, an institution similar to that of Dr. Koch for the biological investigation of the infectious

diseases of Japan. The other gentleman, Professor Aoyama, is a medical graduate of the Tokyo University, where, after spending four years in Berlin in the study of pathology, from 1883 to 1887, he has since been lecturing as professor of medicine. Both gentlemen have now, for some time past, been taking every opportunity on board the "Hygeia" and in the different hospitals, studying the disease in all its stages and making sundry experiments. Professor Aoyama pays special attention to the morphology, and Dr. Kitasato to the biology, of the disease. The results of their observations are now being embodied, for the information of the Japanese Government, in a joint official report, which is in process of elaboration. A local gentleman has been favoured, in the course of an interview, with a brief outline of what will probably be the leading features of this interesting document.

The two specialists, it would seem, agree in identifying the plague now raging in Hongkong with that bubonic plague which devastated Europe first in the sixth century (when it was imported from the Levant), and ever since made its appearance here and there, being historically best known in connection with the Great Plague which decimated London in the 14th and 17th centuries. They have further identified it, to a limited extent, with the sporadic outburst of plague which occurred in Astrakhan from 1878 to 1879, when a small shining bacillus was found in the blood of human patients. But as biology was then in its infancy, and the instruments now available were then hardly known, no great importance can be attached to the description then given of the specific plague bacillus. Again, the two experts have identified the Hongkong plague with that bubonic typhus which Professor Hirsch of Berlin, in his "Typography of Diseases," states to be endemic in the Chinese province of Yunnan. Professor Hirsch's account of the Yunnan plague, they say, stands confirmed by observations made by some medical missionaries at Meng-tze, a district city in Lin-an Fu (Yunnan) situated under lat. $23^{\circ} 34'$ and long. $118^{\circ} 08'$, and more recently by Dr. Horder of Pakhoi, one of the ports open to foreign trade, in the province of Kwang-tung, Lien-chou Fu, under lat. $21^{\circ} 39'$ and long. $108^{\circ} 59'$. From the pathological description which the two gentlemen gave of a typical case of plague, as observed in Hongkong, it would seem that the period of incubation generally lasts from two to seven days, followed by prostration and high fever, starting from 40 degrees Celsius, and concluding with delirium and coma. But protracted cases are generally accompanied by the development of buboes, boils, or petechiæ, convalescence setting in about the sixth day. As regards the biology of the disease, Professor Kitasato considers himself to have been fortunate enough to have discovered the specific bacillus of the local form of plague, and his *confrère*, Professor Aoyama, agrees with him in describing this specific plague-bacillus as being what is called in German a "stäbchen" bacterium, having the form of very slender straight filaments of short length. This bacillus, found in the blood of plague patients from the second day of the outbreak of the disease, and devastating the principal internal organs, has been indisputably identified as the real agent of mischief by Dr. Kitasato. His colleague, Professor Aoyama, agrees with him in stating that, unless the bacillus discovered at Astrakhan but imperfectly described was the same species, no such bacillus has hitherto been found in human blood. The only kinds of known bacilli which to a limited extent may be compared with this plague bacillus are two classes of bacteria hitherto found in animals only, viz., the "milz-brand" bacterium (*bacillus anthracis*) which morphologically resembles the plague-bacillus about as much as the "Hühner-cholera" bacterium (found in poultry diseases) resembles it biologically. Experiments made by Dr. Kitasato in breeding and multiplying the specific plague bacilli discovered in Hongkong and in inoculating different animals with a preparation of the virus thus obtained have invariably produced, within two days, the death of these animals under symptoms conclusively exhibiting the symptoms of plague, though the symptoms of vomiting, diarrhoea, and buboes were absent, owing to the rapid development of the disease. Of course, Dr. Kitasato, being satisfied that, in the case of a plague patient, there is no other alternative but either the bacilli or the patient must die, is on the look-out for bacteriocides, inimical to this specific plague bacillus, and Professor Aoyama is otherwise investigating the peculiar bacteriotherapeutics of plague, but it is too early yet to expect any definite conclusions in these respects. There is some hope, however, that the inquiries now pursued by these specialists may contribute towards the eventual discovery of a cure for this terrible scourge, which at present seems to defy the best medical treatment.

It is the firm conviction of both professors that nothing definite can be said yet with regard to how this plague-bacillus, which so ruinously attacks the principal internal organs of the patient, gets into the human system. They consider it probable

that it is drawn from the air by breathing, but they are decidedly of opinion that the peculiar habits of the Chinese and the general filthy conditions of the dwellings of the lower classes in China and Hongkong form a specially favourable breeding-ground for this particular bacillus. Looking to the peculiar habits of the Chinese people, and to the fact that this terrible plague is endemic in Yunnan, they do not see that there is much ground for the sanguine hope that the plague will ever be permanently stamped out in South China. On the contrary, they fear that it is much more likely that the plague, which has evidently ravaged China since times immemorial without being scientifically noticed, will continue alternately to languish and revive now, since it has once established breeding grounds in so many places which commercially inter-communicate with each other. The investigations of these scientists are by no means concluded yet, and the two professors may, therefore, spend some time yet in Hongkong. Their final official report, whenever it may be ready, will no doubt prove of great value not only to the Japanese, but also to the Hongkong Government; and the University of Berlin may be congratulated upon having furnished Hongkong, and, we may say, the scientific world, with such able, painstaking, and scientifically cautious observers as Professor Kitasato and Professor Aoyama. We must add that the foregoing account has not been corrected by the two scientists, and, as it is merely a summary of what a non-professional, but deeply-interested, listener gathered from a desultory half-hour's conversation, we warn our scientific readers to take the above for what it may be worth.

No. 6.

SIR WILLIAM ROBINSON to the MARQUESS OF RIPON.
(Received August 7, 1894.)

TELEGRAPHIC.

Total mortality 2,504.

No. 7.

SIR WILLIAM ROBINSON to the MARQUESS OF RIPON.
(Received August 7, 1894.)

Government House, Hong Kong,

MY LORD MARQUESS,

July 3, 1894.

ON the 28th ultimo, I received a telegram from your Lordship in these words.*

To this I at once replied.†

I have this afternoon sent you the following telegram.‡

Since the date of my last telegram, there has been a decided improvement in the central and western districts of the city, and a prospect of the cessation of the epidemic which has been rife in the Colony for nearly two months. Happily, the disease has not taken root in the Eastern district.

There are a considerable number of cases in Yaumati, but all the other villages in the Colony are free.

The working staff has been reduced, and the expenditure has been slightly curtailed. Whilst I am glad to be able to send a more favourable report, I may assure your Lordship that the Government will not relax its vigilance until Canton and the Mainland are free.

With reference to the 28th paragraph of my Despatch of the 20th June,§ I regret to report that two of the Japanese bacteriologists have been attacked, viz., Drs. Ishigama and Aoyama. One of these gentleman cut his finger whilst performing a post-mortem operation. The Japanese mission, having been turned out of the Hong Kong Hotel in consequence of these two cases, are now being entertained in the Civil Hospital at the cost of the Government.

H. Allen is convalescing.

I have, &c.

(Signed) WILLIAM ROBINSON.

* See No. 17 in [C.—7461] of July 1894.

† See No. 22 in [C.—7461] of July 1894.

‡ See No. 18 in [C.—7461] of July 1894.

§ No. 2.

No. 8.

SIR WILLIAM ROBINSON to the MARQUESS OF RIPON.
(Received August 7, 1894.)

Government House, Hong Kong,
July 4, 1894.

MY LORD MARQUESS,

WITH reference to the 27th paragraph of my Despatch of the 20th June*, I have the honour to transmit, for your Lordship's information, an "editorial" from the "North China Herald," respecting "the New Plague."

I have, &c.
(Signed) WILLIAM ROBINSON.

Enclosure in No. 8.

THE NEW PLAGUE.

June 29.

A writer in the "Shên-pao" investigates the question of the plague in Canton and Hong Kong. Some say, he remarks, that it is an entirely new disease, while others believe they find it described in old Chinese works, such as the "Su-wen" and the "Shang-hun-lun." The name by which it is now distinguished is taken from the peculiar swellings which appear first behind the ears, then in the armpits and between the legs. It is therefore called kota-wen, wen being the general name for an epidemic, and kota meaning any swelling. The writer identifies it with the yang-tsz-chêng of the province of Yunnan, which has already been described at Mêngtze and Pakhoi by the Commissioners and medical officers of the Chinese Customs residing at those places. The latest of these (for the year ending the 31st of March 1891) is that of Dr. A. Sharp Deane who says in his report of the health of Pakhoi: "Bubonic plague mentioned in my last report as having broke out at Lungchow disappeared in April, after a heavy fall of rain. No cases occurred at this port during this year. The Chinese are of opinion that bubonic plague emanates from the ground, and is favoured by a long continuance of dry weather, when the earth becomes porous, and numerous fissures appear on the surface, facilitating the escape of whatever causes the disease. Heavy rain, they say, prevents the occurrence of plague; or if it is already among them, a downpour of two or three days' duration will cause it to cease."

Looking at the matter under the light of the information we have received, this singular and alarming epidemic may be regarded as a new disease territorially limited to places lying near the tropic of Cancer, and travelling eastward in the same isothermal line from which it began its destructive career. Yunnan is a country where animal life flourishes, and where malaria is always abundantly present. But what is malaria? It is a form of animal life which preys parasitically on the human frame. The small-pox came from the jungle country of the south into China in the second century of our era, as Chinese history assures us. This is the first mention of small-pox in any literature. The reader should not believe what the "Revue des Deux Mondes" says about its being mentioned in China B.C. 1200. This is not the case. Even able writers such as those whose contributions adorn the pages of this French review take liberties which they ought not when speaking of China. In the interest of historical research, it would be well if writers would cease to guess at what is recorded in the Chinese annals. The French savant concludes that small-pox has existed from time immemorial in China and Japan. This is not a statement convincing or satisfactory. The real facts are that the small-pox appeared in China in the second century A.D. and in Europe in the sixth century. It was conveyed to Europe by the Saracens. It originated in the same, or nearly the same, jungle country where the new plague of Hong Kong and Canton sprang up. As it would seem, it was somewhere about the tropic of Cancer in both cases. So it was with cholera. Cholera began in the delta of the Ganges, also in jungle country. The sun is vertical there, heat is intense, vegetation flourishes, and food is abundant for every form of animal life. These pestilential diseases, if we trace them then to their origin, are derived from such regions as the jungles found in the deltas of great rivers, and chiefly those reaching the sea under the tropic of Cancer: there is found the

* No. 2.

greatest variety of animal and vegetable life and there have grown up the various great pestilences which have afflicted mankind. As to the plague which spread over Europe in the 14th, 15th, 16th, and 17th centuries, it may be of African origin, as the "Revue des Deux Mondes" supposes, but it was also, like the alarming plague which is now dying away at Canton and Hong Kong, often characterised by swellings under the armpits and in the groin. There were several kinds of plague, and we cannot be positive in asserting, or denying, the identity of the present plague with those which alarmed our forefathers and desolated Europe. But with regard to this, the present destructive plague, the facts known to us render it extremely probable that it is quite a new disease occasioned, like the typhoons of the China Sea, in some way by the effect of the sun's heat at the tropic of Cancer. Investigation into the origin of these winds has led to the discovery that they commence in the ocean near the Philippine Islands. It is there where the sun turns round at the summer solstice, and there the most destructive winds take their rise.

In some inscrutable manner the powerful influence of the sun in the same latitude, but on land, seems to be connected with the bacilli which cause fatal diseases of epidemic types when stirred to extraordinary activity. The diseases thus occasioned are first local, then epidemic, and then endemic. Whenever the career of these diseases can be checked by sanitary regulations and assiduous medical care, an immense boon is conferred on mankind, because this change from the local to the epidemic and from the epidemic to the endemic form is capable of being checked by intelligent human provisions of a sanitary kind. That the law of advance is from local to epidemic seems to follow plainly from the facts we now possess. Dr. Lowry states that the disease came to Pakhoi from the city of Chinchou, 60 miles to the west. From that place it spread to Lienchou, 20 miles eastward and then appeared at Pakhoi on the coast 50 miles farther. From this seaport to Canton the distance is 150 miles or thereabouts, and the direction is eastward. In the course of 10 or 12 years, this pestilence has travelled from Mengtze in 104° longitude to Hong Kong in 114° in direction of east-south-east. It has kept on the lines of traffic, yet only from west to east on the whole. It comes from a malarious country which has been for four centuries notorious among the Chinese as dangerous to human life. This circumstance supports the Chinese view that this pestilence comes out of the ground. The minute animal that causes it first attacked various animals and then man. Drought is connected with pestilence, and rain often, as in the case of the Yunnan plague, is the means of bringing about a cessation of its ravages. If this pestilence is to be checked before it becomes a world-wide minister of destruction, there must be great sanitary activity and the universal cleansing of streets and sewers. The history of the cholera and of the old plague shows how far diseases of tropical origin may spread after they have acquired new strength, even to temperate climates. To prevent this in future will be a noble triumph of sanitary science.

No. 9.

COLONIAL OFFICE to ADMIRALTY.*

SIR,

Downing Street, August 7, 1894.

I AM directed by the Marquess of Ripon to enclose, for the information of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, the enclosed copy of a Despatch† from the Governor of Hong Kong, which will be included in a Parliamentary Paper, respecting the recent outbreak of bubonic plague at Hong Kong.

2. I am to request that the attention of the Lords of the Admiralty may be called to pars. 4 and 16 of this Despatch, in which the Governor acknowledges the great assistance which he has received during this terrible crisis from the naval and military forces in Hong Kong.

3. His Lordship wishes to add his acknowledgements to those of the Governor.

I have, &c.

(Signed) R. H. MEADE.

* A similar letter was addressed to the War Office.

† No. 2.

No. 10.

THE MARQUESS OF RIPON to SIR WILLIAM ROBINSON.

SIR,

Downing Street, August 10, 1894.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Despatch of the 20th of June,* giving a full account of the outbreak of bubonic plague at Hong Kong and of the measures which have been taken to prevent the spread and minimise the evil of this terrible epidemic.

2. At the conclusion of your interesting Despatch, you express a hope that the proceedings which you have taken will meet with my approval, and I have great pleasure in assuring you that I fully approve of what has been done, as described in your various Despatches, and appreciate the firmness and energy which have been shown by your officers and yourself in the face of a great crisis.

I would ask you to convey my acknowledgements to the gentlemen whose names you have specified, as also to the Commanders of the naval and military forces, thanking them for the assistance which was readily given, and which was of much service to the community. I deeply regret that such assistance was not given without loss of life. A copy of your Despatch has been communicated to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty and to the Secretary of State for War.

3. Mr. Cooper has been consulted informally with regard to the drainage question, as affected by the plague; but, as to any measures to be taken for the prevention of similar troubles hereafter, by promoting sanitation and prohibiting overcrowding, I prefer to wait until you have been able to consult him after his return to the Colony, which is now imminent, and are able to submit definite proposals with some approximate estimate of the cost. You will also be able, at a later date, to measure more accurately than is possible at present the total loss which the Colony has suffered.

4. I take this opportunity of acknowledging the receipt of the Despatches† of the dates noted in the margin, which are also connected with the subject of the bubonic plague.

I have, &c.
(Signed) RIPON.

4th June.
20th June.
22nd June.
3rd July.
4th July.
1894.

No. 11.

SIR WILLIAM ROBINSON to the MARQUESS OF RIPON.

(Received August 13, 1894.)

Government House, Hong Kong,
July 7, 1894.

MY LORD MARQUESS,

IN continuation of my Despatch of the 3rd instant,‡ I have the honour to inform you that I sent the following telegram to your Lordship this morning.§

The statistics of the plague since the date of its outbreak are as follows:—

| | Chinese. | Indians. | Portuguese. | Europeans. | Others. | Total. |
|-----------------------------|----------|----------|-------------|------------|---------|--------|
| Admissions to hospitals - - | 1,933 | 17 | 17 | 11 | 10 | 1,988 |
| Deaths - - - | 2,331 | 11 | 13 | × 3 | 5 | 2,363 |
| Discharges - - - | — | — | — | — | — | 74 |

The total number under treatment yesterday was 156.

I annex a nominal list of the Europeans, Portuguese, and Eurasians, Indians and others who have been attacked and admitted to the hospitals. "Others" includes Japanese. Those marked with a cross (×) are dead.

Of the Europeans, Lockley and Williams were discharged several days ago, and the remaining soldiers whom I saw yesterday on board the "Hygeia" are progressing favourably.

Professor Aoyama ("Hygeia") is seriously ill, but Dr. Ishigama is apparently mending. The Japanese Government has telegraphed an expression of its cordial thanks to this Government for the kindness that has been extended to the members

* No 2.

† Nos. 27 in [C.—7461] and 2, 6, 7 and 8 in this paper.

‡ No. 7.

§ See No. 23 in [C.—7461].

of the Japanese Mission, which includes Professor Aoyama and Dr. Ishigama, and which was sent to Hong Kong to inquire into, and report upon, the plague.

I have, &c.

(Signed) WILLIAM ROBINSON.

P.S.—The last report from the “Hygeia” as to Professor Aoyama is that he is slightly better.

(Initialed) W. R.

July 10, 1894.

Enclosure in No. 11.

Europeans.

Edwin Lockley.
Chas. Williams.
Francis Bellew.
Capt. Geo. Vesey. ×
Jas. Dalton. ×
Wm. Humphreys.

Henry Thurston.
Wm. Allford.
Frank Reeves.
Henry Allen.
Fred Benning. ×

I. Gibson reported dead. Discharged; not a true case of plague.

I. Boliver × died at Wellington Barracks. He was too ill to be removed to “Hygeia.”

Japanese.

Professor Aoyama.
Dr. Ishigama.
Abi Hiyakutaro.
Achi Yemamoto. ×
Osenza. ×

Mrs. Kawani. ×
O Kitz.
O Jugo. ×
T. Nakahara. ×

Portuguese and Eurasians.

Unkown. ×
Joseph Fernandez. ×
Francisco Gonsalves.
Mathilda Martinez. ×
Francisco Delabega. ×
Cypruno Gonsalves.
Sellan Gonsalves.
Pedro Medereiro. ×
Antonio. ×

Filomeno Tobentino. ×
Andrew Pereira. ×
P. Senna.
Zepherino Pahorino Lopez. ×
Julia Grant. ×
Valentine Villeges. ×
John William. ×
Minino Gracias. ×

Indians.

Mrs. Bisho. ×
Kennie Bisho.
Fatty Deen.
Nido. ×
C. Choovermell. ×
Mrs. Sorrid. ×
Namar. ×
Nana Mull.
Fatima Kurrem. ×

Loko Mull. ×
Gunuvo Mull. ×
Koonda Mull.
Shevak Mull. ×
Ma Ma Satiar. ×
Fatima. ×
Dimshaw Sorabji.
Ma Ma Mond.

Others.

Mrs. Ezra.

NOTE.—The above are the names of persons (other than Chinese) who have suffered from the plague in this Colony. Those marked with a × after the name have died. The return is made out to noon.

July 6, 1894.

(Signed) E. A. RAM.

No. 12.

SIR WILLIAM ROBINSON to the MARQUESS OF RIPON.

(Received August 13, 1894.)

Government House, Hong Kong,

July 8, 1894.

MY LORD MARQUESS,

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship, with reference to my telegram of the 16th June* and my Despatch of the 20th June,† that I am glad to report that Gibson, a member of the garrison who was stated to be dead, was really discharged convalescent from the "Hygeia." I accordingly telegraphed to your Lordship this morning.‡

J. Boliver, mentioned in my telegram of the 22nd June,§ died from the plague in Wellington Barracks. After the disease from which he was suffering had been diagnosed, he was too ill to be removed to the "Hygeia."

I have, &c.

(Signed) WILLIAM ROBINSON.

No. 13.

SIR WILLIAM ROBINSON to the MARQUESS OF RIPON

(Received August 16, 1894.)

TELEGRAPHIC.

Total mortality, 2535.

No. 14.

ADMIRALTY to COLONIAL OFFICE.

(Received August 18, 1894.)

[Answered by No. 15.]

SIR,

Admiralty, August 17, 1894.

I AM commanded by My Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to request that you will inform the Secretary of State that the Commander-in-Chief on the China Station, in a letter dated 8th ultimo, No. 287, from Japan, has reported that the plague at Hong Kong showed little reduction in virulence by last accounts; and that Commodore Boyes, while doing everything in his power to assist the Colony, is taking all requisite precautions to prevent the spread of the pest to the Service afloat, in which he has been hitherto successful.

I am, &c.

(Signed) R. D. AWDRY.

No. 15.

COLONIAL OFFICE to ADMIRALTY.

SIR,

Downing Street, August 21, 1894.

I AM directed by the Marquess of Ripon to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 17th instant|| relative to the Bubonic Plague at Hong Kong, and to request you to inform the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that the reports lately received by telegraph from the Governor of Hong Kong have been more hopeful in character than that of the 8th ultimo from the Naval Commander-in-Chief on the China station, to which your letter refers.

I am, &c.

(Signed) JOHN BRAMSTON.

* No. 10 in [C.-7461].

† No. 2.

‡ See No. 24 in [C.-7461].
|| No. 14.

§ No. 12 in [C.-7461].

No. 16.

SIR WILLIAM ROBINSON to the MARQUESS of RIPON.
(Received August 23, 1894.)

TELEGRAPHIC.

Total mortality, 2,556.

No. 17.

SIR WILLIAM ROBINSON to the MARQUESS OF RIPON.
(Received August 29, 1894.)

TELEGRAPHIC.

Total mortality, 2,560.

Date Issued *Duc.*

001722

[illegible]

Photomount
Pamphlet
Binder
Gaylord Bros., Inc.
Makers
Syracuse, N.Y.
Pat. No. 877188

RC179
H6
+894Hc

